

## Let's Face it

**Solomon** is trying to get the world to face up to a very ugly and frightening truth.

The frustrating thing is, if the world did face up to it, it would become far less frightening and would soon cease to be true.

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**Update:** And here's a thoughtful piece by Evan Coyne Maloney on a related issue: **Abu Ghraib & Nick Berg**. (Via **InstaPundit**.)

Fri, 05/14/2004 - 03:31 | [digg](#) | [del.icio.us](#) | [permalink](#)

## Dangerous turn

So, what is the point of this article in Solomon? What does the author ask the "Zionists" to do? Seems unclear to me. People all around the world seemed to miss the rise of Hitler - true. People seem to miss the rise of new Islamofashist ideology - true. But not only Islam - in fact, any religion as a social institute (not as someones personal beliefs) is evil. So what shall we do? Strike first, I guess. In what way?

Any extremist ideology usually starts from showing the truth about future decay unless we do something now. And of course, the people on this site are intelligent enough not to allow primitive instincts to burst out, but...ideas have consequences.

The article makes an important step - it doesn't only tell about specific moral failuers in Islam, it suggests starting a war against it. Or am I wrong about the main idea of it?

A war in Iraq has been a big failure for US not because some idiots tortured Iraqis in a jail, but because it was unjustified (there is no WMD, no Osama in there) and ineffective (more radical islamists are on their way). But the goal was right - remove the dictatorship of Saddam. The previous shameful US campaign in Jugoslavia - destroyed economy, islamists on the rise. How does it happen - whenever America goes to fight Islam radicalism - it always helps them. And 50 former american diplomats are wrong about loosing an image of "good guys" because of US Meadle East policy. The outside world sees Americans as similar extremist with a different name - may be it is not completely untrue..

by a reader on Fri, 05/14/2004 - 08:52 | [reply](#)

## A couple of notes

First, thank you for the link. It's gratifying to spend time writing something and have it actually be read and appreciated.

Second, a bit of clarification for those who may need it. The theme of the article is basically me walking my thoughts through - thoughts brought on by hearing people carp about the major conflict of our world today - the fight against Middle Eastern Islamofascism and Totalitarian demagoguery - being just a product of us needing to understand each other better which I believe is likely nonsense and more a product of wishful projection. While I go a bit afield from that, that's just a product of writing without an outline I guess.

I wander into two territories to make my point. The first being Nazi Germany, which is an overused metaphor, but that's because it's such a good one for two reasons: Not as a prescription that we should march across Europe and seize Berlin (although as I write that it does contain some appeal), but One, because anyone worth talking to immediately grasps WW2 as about as close to a big war of good v. evil as you're ever likely to get, and two, because even those uninitiated in history have at least a basic outline of the facts involved. You don't have to do any extra explaining to make a point. There are plenty of other examples where physical confrontation was extremely likely regardless of how much talking either side did (King Philip's War here in New England coming to mind), but many of them would require a history lesson in and of themselves and would likely sidetrack the point. WW2 is very convenient for these reasons.

The second place I wander to is Israel and antisemitism, of course. If "the enemy" can so twist history, logic, morality, and the reporting of fact to demonise and ultimately destroy that country, and create hatred of Jews as they have, then it will only be a matter of time before those same forces are turned on us next. There's nothing to stop it, and, as readers of this web site know, those forces are ultimately irrational, based as they are on the twisting of all of the above. How can one reason with the irrational? Further, it is internally corrupting. That could be another whole post, but there's something in that letter from the 50+ "ex-diplomats" and their Arabist, antisemitic boobery that encapsulates the concept.

I don't generally do prescriptions. There's something ultimately frivolous and silly in a blogger making war plans that makes me want to avoid such posting. I'll only go so far as to say that I support opinion leaders who understand the gravity and reality of the situation we face and leave it there. Others will have to pick up from where my essay leaves off.

I am also cognizant of my own fallibility. It is possible I am wrong, and I understand that the concepts I address may lead toward some overreaching extremism - hence my holding out of some hope and ending the essay as I do. But at the same time I want to avoid being an "extremist," I'm not going to shy away from the truth as I

see it in order to avoid a label.

by [Solomon](#) on Fri, 05/14/2004 - 15:10 | [reply](#)

## Talking about the truth - but not only

Apart from informing everyone and sharing your thoughts, your comparison with late ignition in WW2 does a good job of provoking action. And, as I said, US already tried to start first with regrettable results. I am only afraid of worse consequences of such pro-active "highly moral" future American/British actions. I hope we all agree that it wouldn't be possible to start anti-German campaign before 1939, although there shouldn't be any appeasements and delays after the war has started with occupying Czechoslovakia.

by a reader on Fri, 05/14/2004 - 15:54 | [reply](#)

## I can't say

History is as it was, no changing it. I've no encyclopedic memory, but someone who can rattle off the facts better than I can probably show that Hitler had been violating his treaty obligations since long before 1939. Yet the calculus at every point was to let it go rather than risk bloodshed. No one event was anything anyone wanted to risk war over, although they could have. (Reminds me of, "One more inspection...OK, but if Saddam doesn't cooperate THIS time, oh boy, we're really gonna talk tough then...") Chamberlain, a hawk rendered a dove by the horrors of WW1 ran more by the philosophy of, "As long as we keep talking, at least we're not fighting..." In the mean-time, Hitler built and re-armed... (I don't mean to only pick on Chamberlain here, the US didn't enter until we were bombed and declared war on, but again, Chamberlain is a convenient device to make the point.)

by [Solomon](#) on Fri, 05/14/2004 - 18:57 | [reply](#)

## Re: I can't say

Solomon wrote:

History is as it was, no changing it

Indeed. Nevertheless (as Solomon implies), 'counterfactual' statements about it can be meaningful (see my book, [The Fabric of Reality](#) for an explanation). In fact, history, and the world in general, are incomprehensible without them.

For instance, it takes an unusually extreme commitment to political determinism (or to a variety of other life-denying falsehoods) to deny, as 'a reader' does, that if the West had adopted different policies, such as those advocated by Churchill and others, Hitler would have been stopped before 1939, and at the cost of fewer than fifty million deaths. This is not only a meaningful statement,

despite the impossibility of changing history, it is an extremely

important truth.

Likewise it is true that had the policy of appeasement been pursued for only a few years longer, then the consequences (either a nuclear slugging match or a Nazi victory) would have made the actual World War look like a brief inconvenience.

by [David Deutsch](#) on Fri, 05/14/2004 - 20:07 | [reply](#)

## Treaty Obligations

OK I realise this is an old string but I've only just read it!

I thought I'd respond to the comment on German treaty obligations and how they were breaking them long before 1939. The treaty of Versailles limited Germany to an army of 100,000 with no tanks or heavy artillery. It also restricted their Navy to 15,000 men and no submarines while the fleet was limited to six battleships (of less than 10,000 tons), six cruisers and 12 destroyers. Germany was not permitted an air force.

OK here are a few facts to show how Germany was breaking these obligations long before 1939.

### The Army

Panzer IV design work had begun in 1935 and trials of prototypes were undertaken in 1937. The Panzer I marked the first production tank design in Germany since the conclusion of World War I. In 1932, specifications for a light (5-ton) tank were made and issued to the German industrial manufacturers. Production began in 1934. Recognising that this programme was banned under Versailles the Panzer I was referred to as "Landwirtschaftlicher Schlepper" (an agricultural tractor).

### The Navy

The treaty limited Battleships to 10,000 tons but the Pocket Battleships all had displacements over this limit. The first of which, Deutschland, was launched in 1933. The famous Battleship Bismarck was laid down in July 1936. It's displacement was almost five times the limit in Versailles.

### The Air force

Heinkel, Messerschmitt, Dornier and others were developing planes for the Luftwaffe from the early 1930's. In 1934 the Luftwaffe held a competition to choose the design for its principal fighter. The winner was the famous Messerschmitt BF109. The Heinkel He111, one of the bombers responsible for most of the damage during the Blitz in 1940 first flew in 1935.

by RK on Wed, 06/28/2006 - 14:20 | [reply](#)